

## Office of Professional Accountability (OPA)

### Commendations & Complaints Report

### October 2003

#### Commendations:

Commendations Received in October: 45

Commendations Received to Date: 691

Rank	Summary
(1) Officer	School administrators at a local university appreciated an officer's assistance and participation in meeting with representatives of a fraternity. The officer provided invaluable safety and behavior information for future use by the fraternity.
(1) Officer	A citizen reported that a family member was missing and an officer responded to assist. At a later date, the officer followed-up and contacted the citizens regarding their safety and welfare. The officer was professional, caring and understanding and went far beyond the expectations of a police officer.
(4) Officers	Four officers investigated a residential burglary and their thorough combined work proved successful. The homeowner identified the suspect from a montage and five days later the suspect was arrested.
(1) Dispatcher	An out-of-state law enforcement professional requested assistance from a dispatcher. The dispatcher went out of his way to help with the situation.
(1) Dispatcher	A dispatcher received a hang-up 911 call and immediately returned the call and asked if the caller needed assistance. The caller was in pain and required immediate medical assistance. If the dispatcher had not pursued the hang-up, the caller may have died.
(1) Civilian	The department received a letter from an outside emergency agency for the countless hours and late evenings spent to meet computer deadlines. The successful outcome of their computer system stems from that diligent work.
(1) Officer	A family extended their appreciation for the excellent service received in locating a mentally challenged family member. The responding officer made every effort to locate the individual and kept the family apprised of his findings. The officer located the individual and exhibited a compassionate and caring demeanor, and offered the family member several avenues of assistance. The officer is a credit to the department and community.
(2) Sergeants (Unidentified number) Detectives Officers	A citizen appreciated the work done by the Seattle Police Department in a recent drug arrest at a local playground park. A park had been adopted by a group of drug dealers and there was a constant threat of violence to the community. The investigation and arrests were professional and brought credit to the department. The neighborhood is on the mend and the community feels safe once again. A special thanks to all involved.
(2) Officers (1) CSO	A community service officer received an appreciation letter for assisting and locating a down-syndrome family member that walked away from her job upset and angry. Two police officers located the individual walking down the street. The CSO knew the individual and calmed her enough to take her home. The CSO provided a personal connection, primary needs assistance and security for the affected individual.
(1) Sergeant (1) Officer	A business contacted the police department seeking guidance on the best way to handle a difficult situation with an unstable employee. The responding sergeant and officer were skilled and knowledgeable in providing a range of alternatives. Ultimately, the matter was resolved without incident thanks to the thoughtful and quality assistance from our police department.

(1) Officer	An officer's active patrol in a secluded area was greatly appreciated. His encouragement and suggestions helped reduce exposure for the local businesses.
(4) Officers	A local bank was robbed and the officer that responded quickly radioed a detailed description of the suspect. Other officers captured the suspect within a short amount of time. Thanks and recognition were extended to the officers for their quick response and safe apprehension of the suspect.
(1) Captain	As a person living in the area for 20 years, I would like to convey my enthusiastic support for such active police work in the community. Thank you for your collaborative efforts in law enforcement and making our area a safer place to live.
(1) Sergeant	A local community wanted to thank a sergeant and department for all the continued police support with Oktoberfest. The police presence was very important in providing a safe event.
(2) Sergeants	Two sergeants' received a letter of appreciation from an out of the area law enforcement agency, for providing excellent instruction to a specialized unit. With the training the agency was able to systematically establish a team and could deploy members in a safe and effective manner.
(1) Detective	A citizen extended his appreciation to a detective regarding a drug incident where the citizen's son was involved. The detective sincerely cared and tried to assist the parent with good advice.
(1) Safety Officer	An appreciation note to the Seattle Police Safety Officer and the department for all the help and support that was provided in a time of need.
(1) Officer	A large fight broke out at a local high school and an individual said he had a gun. An officer responded and dealt with the crowd in a firm, kind and caring way. The officer respectfully talked to everyone and his efforts should be emulated.
(1) Officer	An officer assisted with court testimony regarding multiple crimes against a native of a foreign country. The officer was cooperative and helpful and assisted with previous case information which provided additional details. The officer conducted himself well and the court was impressed with his testimony. The proficiency and professionalism of the officer reflected well on the Seattle Police Department.
(1) Officer	An individual contacted the police department and requested an officer when a former roommate was to remove her personal belongings from the residence. The officer was kind, courteous, and professional and understood the dilemma.
(1) Detective	Accolades were given to a detective on his recovery of lost/stolen property.
(1) Officer	A rental car business commended an officer for diligent and professional police work that included a friendly and sympathetic demeanor. The letter stated that the officer had restored the authors faith in the police.
(2) Officers	Two officers saved the life of an 82 year-old motorist who had an apparent heart attack or stroke. The officers observed a vehicle that had come to a complete stop in the middle of a road, and the driver was slumped down in the vehicle. The officers were able to remove the individual and call for medical assistance. The officers responded quickly and decisively and saved the life of the individual. They were commended and recognized for an outstanding effort.
(1) Detective	A prosecuting attorney had the pleasure of working with a detective to prepare a burglary case for trial. The detective worked diligently to respond to every investigative request and was professional throughout the investigation and the trial. I look forward to working with the detective again.
(8) Officers	The vice section completed a three-week sting operation which relied heavily on the operations bureaus for undercover officers and prisoner transportation. Fifty-nine suspects were arrested and booked into jail and over \$10,000.00 was seized.

(1) Officer	An intruder broke into a residence and the tenants encountered him on his exit. A 911 call was immediately placed and an officer arrived within minutes. The officer was impressive with his professionalism, and the tenants were grateful for the kindness he showed. The officer advised on ways to better secure the home and the suggestions have been implemented.
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## October 2003 Closed Cases:

*Cases involving alleged misconduct of officers and employees in the course of their official public duties are summarized below. Identifying information has been removed.*

*Cases are reported by allegation type. One case may be reported under more than one category.*

### UNNECESSARY FORCE

Synopsis	Action Taken
Complainant alleged unnecessary force was used in his arrest, causing injuries.	The evidence indicates that the named officers did use force on the subject to combat resistance. The force was reported, screened, and documented. The subject was intoxicated and has a criminal history which includes resisting arrest. The subject did not produce the two alleged witnesses as he had promised. Finding – EXONERATED.
Complainant alleged the named officer used unnecessary force during his arrest for domestic violence.	The complainant's credibility is questionable, and the evidence does not support the complainant's account of the incident. Finding – UNFOUNDED.
Complainant alleged the named officers arrested him for no apparent reason during Mardi Gras, and used unnecessary force when placing him into a prisoner van.	Available evidence indicates complainant was arrested for pedestrian interference after refusing several orders to get out of the street. The amount of force used to place the resisting subject in the van was minimal and would not require reporting. The complainant's credibility is questionable. Finding – EXONERATED.
Complainant alleged that excessive force was used during his arrest.	Evidence showed that standard arrest techniques were used during handcuffing. The force used was reasonable and within Department policy and training. Finding – EXONERATED.
Complainant alleged unnecessary force by the named officer in an arrest following subject's fleeing from a stolen car.	The named officer admitted to using a distraction technique taught in training. The technique was screened by the officer's supervisor, and does not trigger use of force reporting requirements. Finding – EXONERATED. The complainant also alleged profanity by the officer, but was not consistent in his assertions, and generally lacked credibility. Finding – UNFOUNDED.
Complainant alleged unnecessary force was used by the named officers in the arrest of a subject. The complainant was not a witness to the arrest.	The subject and alleged witness did not cooperate with the investigation. The evidence showed that the complainant became hostile and assaulted an officer during an investigative stop. During the struggle, the subject reached for an object at his waist and was found to be carrying loaded weapons. Finding – EXONERATED.

**CONDUCT UNBECOMING AN OFFICER**

<b>Synopsis</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
Complainant alleged the named employee forced him to sit in the rear of a police vehicle that had urine on it from another subject.	The evidence supports that the officer did not know there was urine on the seat, that he immediately removed the complainant from the vehicle once it was discovered, that both officers helped the complainant clean himself up, and that a different vehicle was called to transport the complainant. Finding – EXONERATED.
Anonymous complainant alleged inappropriate conduct by off-duty officer [while vacationing with fellow employees out-of-state].	The evidence showed no evidence of officer misconduct. The complaint was without merit. Finding – ADMINISTRATIVELY UNFOUNDED.
Complainant alleged the named employee used profanity while discussing a traffic incident.	The complainant and the parking enforcement officer gave conflicting accounts of the exchange. The officer admitted to the use of one swear word, but not others. Finding – NOT SUSTAINED.
Complainant alleged that while the named officers were working off-duty, they used profanity during a parking complaint incident.	A civilian witness refuted the complainant's account. The complainant did not cooperate in the investigation. Finding – UNFOUNDED.
Complainant alleged the named officer used a racial slur while he was being detained by multiple officers checking on a warrant.	The evidence shows this complaint to be without merit. It was made only after he was told there was nothing improper with the initial detention by another officer. The complainant did not cooperate further with the investigation. The named officer and multiple officer witness officers deny that the slur was ever used. Finding – UNFOUNDED.

**FAILURE TO TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION**

<b>Synopsis</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
Complainant alleged the named officer failed to take appropriate action by not arresting the person who assaulted his wife.	The evidence supports that the named officer did take the appropriate action at the incident. Both subjects were detained, facts were gathered, both parties were identified, and a thorough incident report was written. The named officer also had a sergeant screen his decision to not arrest the subject. Finding – ADMINISTRATIVELY EXONERATED.

**Definitions of Findings:**

**“Sustained”** means the allegation of misconduct is supported by a preponderance of the evidence.

**“Not sustained”** means the allegation of misconduct was neither proved nor disproved by a preponderance of the evidence.

**“Unfounded”** means a preponderance of evidence indicates the alleged act did not occur as reported or classified, or is false.

**“Exonerated”** means a preponderance of evidence indicates the conduct alleged did occur, but that the conduct was justified, lawful and proper.

**Referred for Supervisory Resolution.**

**Training or Policy Recommendation** means that there has been no willful violation but that there may be deficient policies or inadequate training that need to be addressed.

**“Administratively Unfounded/Exonerated”** is a discretionary finding which may be made prior to the completion that the complaint was determined to be significantly flawed procedurally or legally; or without merit, i.e., complaint is false or subject recants allegations, preliminary investigation reveals mistaken/wrongful employee identification, etc, or the employee's actions were found to be justified, lawful and proper and according to training.

**“Administratively Inactivated”** means that the investigation cannot proceed forward, usually due to insufficient information or the pendency of other investigations. The investigation may be reactivated upon the discovery of new, substantive information or evidence. Inactivated cases will be included in statistics but may not be summarized in this report if publication may jeopardize a subsequent investigation.

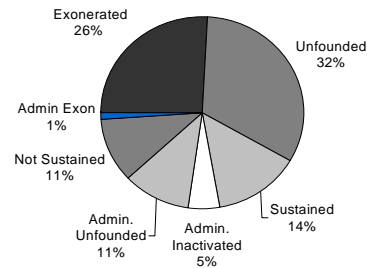
## Status of OPA Contacts to Date:

### 2002 Contacts

	December 2002	Jan. - Dec. 2002
Contact Logs	50	573
Cases Assigned for Supervisory Review	11	104
Cases Assigned for Investigation (IS; LI)	17	201
Cases Closed	0	184*
Commendations	27	1,416

\*includes 2002 cases closed in 2003

**CHART A**  
**Dispositions of Allegations in Completed Investigations**  
**2002 Cases**  
**N=361 Allegations in 184 cases**



### 2003 Contacts

	October 2003	Jan-Dec 2003
Preliminary Investigation Reports	20	391
Cases Assigned for Supervisory Review	6	74
Cases Assigned for Investigation (IS;LI)	24	156
Commendations	45	691